

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases. By N. B. WARD, F.R.S., F.L.S. Second edition. Pp. 143. London: Van Voorst, 1852.

MR. WARD'S cases for the growth of plants in situations naturally unfavourable for their development are too well known to require description. They take the place of the old mignonette-box on the window-sill, enabling their owner to grow plants which under other circumstances he could never have dreamt of. They serve as elegant ornaments in the drawing-room; they furnish the suburban horticulturist with a ready means of striking cuttings and protecting tender plants during the winter; in fact, to a certain extent they render those luxuries of the rich—the greenhouse and conservatory—accessible to every one who can afford to lay out a few shillings with that object. But there is another class to whom these cases are of still more value—we allude to those numerous botanists whose avocations necessitate their constant residence in one or other of our great cities, and who, though no way behind their country brothers in their admiration for nature and zeal for science, have yet but few opportunities of observing growing plants, except perhaps during their annual holiday, or on an occasional hebdomadal excursion. To such these cases are invaluable,—enabling them to have constantly under their eyes, during the whole course of its development, almost any plant that they may wish to study. They are especially useful in growing ferns, many species which are perfectly intractable under other treatment flourishing in them luxuriantly. Nor is it in many cases necessary for botanical purposes to go to any great expense—a wide-mouthed bottle furnished with a cover will serve to grow many plants as well as the most elegant case.

Another purpose for which these cases are employed, and by no means the least important of their applications, is the transport of living plants to and from distant regions. By their means a long sea voyage becomes a much less serious matter than formerly, and many plants will now no doubt reach our hothouses which have hitherto baffled the ingenuity of collectors.

In the elegant little book, whose title stands at the head of this notice, Mr. Ward lays before the public a statement of what has been and may be done by the development of the principles on which his cases are constructed. His work is divided into six chapters, of which the first is devoted to the consideration of the conditions necessary to the growth of plants in a state of nature—the second treats of the influences which produce a prejudicial effect upon vegetable life in large towns—the third contains an account of the mode in which the author was led to the discovery of the principle on which his closed cases are constructed, with many interesting details connected with the practical working of the principle—the fourth chapter points out the utility of the closed cases for the conveyance of plants on shipboard—the fifth the enjoyment offered by the closed cases to

the working man—and the sixth the probable future applications of the facts detailed in the preceding chapters, in scientific investigations and in the treatment of disease. The work closes with an appendix containing letters relative to Mr. Ward's cases which have passed between that gentleman and several of our leading scientific men. It is ornamented with a series of very nicely executed woodcuts representing some of the principal forms in which the cases may be constructed, in order that those of its readers who may be desirous of commencing the cultivation of plants in closed cases may "choose for themselves." We think that few will rise from the perusal of this attractive little volume without feeling some such desire.

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

LINNÆAN SOCIETY.

June 1, 1852.—R. Brown, Esq., President, in the Chair.

Read a paper "On two new genera of *Fungi*." By the Rev. M. J. Berkeley, F.L.S.

After some preliminary observations on the gratification attendant on the satisfactory determination of the synonyms of the earlier writers, and on the advantages to be derived from an attentive study of their works, particularly (as regards *Fungi*) those of Micheli, Schmidel, Müller and Battarra, Mr. Berkeley proceeded to call the attention of the Society to two subjects, the one figured by Battarra and the other by Bulliard. The figure of Battarra is contained in his "*Fungorum Agri Ariminensis Historia*," t. 40, and represents a *Phallus* which some later writers have referred to *Phallus caninus*, Huds., although at first sight it bears but a remote resemblance to that species. Several specimens of it were found, according to Battarra, in the neighbourhood of Rome, and he describes them as having the volva dirty white, coriaceous, and filled with a mucilaginous substance, as in the other species of *Phallus*. From this arose a club-shaped cellular receptacle, hollow within, the upper part being even and solid within (meaning probably that it was imperforate), and covered with a crust which was red when the fungus was young, but when it had arrived at maturity the top was green with a zone of red beneath it, the lower portion of the stem being dirty white sprinkled with reddish brown superficial specks: when the fungus was past maturity, the upper portion passed into a foetid fluid. It would seem that Battarra did not see the fungus when fresh, and that his figure was taken from a dried specimen; but it is very difficult to conceive how a fungus tapering to a point, as exhibited in Sowerby's figure of *P. caninus*, could by any mode of drying assume the broadly clavate form exhibited by Battarra's figure. A fungus, however, has been recently found in S. Carolina by H. W. Ravenel, Esq., which exhibits the peculiar form of that of Battarra, and when forwarded to Mr. Berkeley by the Rev. M. A. Curtis was noticed as differing greatly in structure from the other species of *Phallus*